

STERLING FINANCIAL CORP /WA/

Form 8-K

December 26, 2006

**UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549**

**FORM 8-K
CURRENT REPORT**

PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

Date of Report (Date of earliest event reported): December 20, 2006

STERLING FINANCIAL CORPORATION
(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Washington
(State or other jurisdiction of
incorporation or organization)

0-20800
(Commission File Number)

91-1572822
(I.R.S. Employer
Identification No.)

111 North Wall Street, Spokane, Washington 99201

(Address of principal executive offices) (Zip Code)

(509) 458-3711

(Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

Not Applicable

(Former Name or Former Address, if Changed Since Last Report)

Check the appropriate box below if the Form 8-K filing is intended to simultaneously satisfy the filing obligation of the registrant under any of the following provisions:

- Written communications pursuant to Rule 425 under the Securities Act (17 CFR 230.425)
 - Soliciting material pursuant to Rule 14a-12 under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14a-12)
 - Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 14d-2(b) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14d-2(b))
 - Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 13e-4(c) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.13e-4(c))
-

INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN THE REPORT

Item 5.02. Departure of Directors or Principal Officers; Election of Directors; Appointment of Principal Officers.

(d) On December 22, 2006, Sterling Financial Corporation (Sterling) issued a press release announcing the appointment of Michael F. Reuling to the Sterling Board of Directors. The appointment was effective on December 20, 2006. The text of the press release is included as Exhibit 99.1 to this report.

Item 9.01. Financial Statements and Exhibits.

(c) The following exhibit is filed herewith:

| Exhibit No. | Exhibit Description |
|-------------|---|
| 99.1 | Press release text of Sterling Financial Corporation dated December 22, 2006. |

2

S I G N A T U R E

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned thereunto duly authorized.

STERLING FINANCIAL CORPORATION

(Registrant)

December 26, 2006

By: /s/ Daniel G. Byrne

Date

Daniel G. Byrne
Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer

3